

# Bard

Bard College  
**Bard Digital Commons**

---

Robert Kelly Manuscripts

Robert Kelly Archive

---

1-2008

janF2008

Robert Kelly  
*Bard College*

Follow this and additional works at: [http://digitalcommons.bard.edu/rk\\_manuscripts](http://digitalcommons.bard.edu/rk_manuscripts)

---

## Recommended Citation

Kelly, Robert, "janF2008" (2008). *Robert Kelly Manuscripts*. Paper 612.  
[http://digitalcommons.bard.edu/rk\\_manuscripts/612](http://digitalcommons.bard.edu/rk_manuscripts/612)

This Manuscript is brought to you for free and open access by the Robert Kelly Archive at Bard Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Robert Kelly Manuscripts by an authorized administrator of Bard Digital Commons. For more information, please contact [digitalcommons@bard.edu](mailto:digitalcommons@bard.edu).

**Bard**

= = = = =

But when the orchestra is tuning up  
we're not supposed to be listening.  
The horns we hear burbling back there  
are from another forest – that's the one  
where I really want to wander  
soaked with that rain, chased  
by its wolves and chasing its deer.  
Not the polite scored beauty soon  
about to resolve out of all this sound,  
but the wild wood. The green word.

24 January 2008

[dream, verbatim & after]

Noah,  
who ducked his face into the snow  
and plunged his bare arm  
into a vat of rotten wheat  
cried out  
I wish I never had one of these!

*(...end of verbatim)*

meaning a body.  
Meaning to be here with us.  
Birth, or Africa.

25 January 2008

## LOTUSES

All flowers flower  
out of dirt below.  
Some boast the white  
untouched seduction of  
the lotus opening  
far above the muck  
from which it knows.

So from the town  
all saints grow,  
the noise still feeds them  
in desert silences.

25 January 2008

= = = = =

**Let be animal**  
small to snow  
big to a photon though  
composed of naught  
else that I can see.

25 January 2008

= = = = =

We look for souls  
to share our fetishes.

25.1.08

## A SEAL

But this is close to that  
the way a seal  
smoothes through the green  
dark water of Galway Bay.

A city there, a remembering  
place sprawled on the sea.  
I look at this sinuous  
animal we saw, I think

Be me again, relieve me  
of this identity, be fully  
human the way no  
ordinary me can be.

I change places with the sea.

25 January 2008

## CAFÉ SPERL

There I am sitting in Vienna  
writing letters to no one.

25.1.08



## FARBENLEHRE

Me again. The work of it.  
The shape of the actual  
distance is what comes

between the skin and its clothes.  
Take off that long pale coat:

the color in the middle of the spectrum  
turns from green to a strange  
purple pink intensity:

Goethe's negative spectrum.  
The light turned inside out.

25 January 2009

= = = = =

**Squeeze.** A certainty  
is hand.

Hold.  
The scat of politics  
is Saturday  
eternally. Connive  
at paying no attention.

Brother Zombies, listen in me!

We  
began by listening, all  
we ever did  
was hear,

we are just echolalia of the flesh,  
womb-words blithered into time.

We stumble barefoot into space.  
Genug already. We are the dead  
arriving for their breakfast,  
or yours. We are the dead  
lined up in the bookshops  
anxious for your autograph  
on a book we wrote ourselves.  
We wrote everything there is.

26 January 2008

= = = = =

**Lark alumnae o**

come creep down her  
family tree a thousand  
snapshots already posted  
and still a bird  
is high, a man sits still  
on earth producing  
mercaptan compounds  
busy at his chemicals.  
His set spreads out  
along the Straits of Hormuz  
the refineries themselves  
where the sun once  
fell into my hands  
and I gobbled it up and have  
ever since been on fire,  
quenchable maybe but  
she isn't here yet, that pale  
moon sucks my cinders out.

26 January 2008

= = = = =

The trouble is tiger.  
Zombies I woke with  
and now this big thing  
with stripes and teeth  
comes to take away  
what I thought was my life  
but was only a borrowed  
thing, a light bulb  
snatched from the cellar  
to light up the porch  
a little while before time  
or weather turns it off for good.

26 January 2008  
Kingston

= = = = =

Abate an hour  
or spill a sea  
clam by clam  
onto the shore.

Fidelity is a kind of fish  
or an argument,  
one or the other,  
something suddenly here

gasping at my feet  
or closed against the light  
a message I suppose  
from the bleeding core

of things we call the night.

26 January 2008  
Kingston

= = = = =

There I was standing on La Cienega in 1972  
then suddenly it was Two-thousand-and-eight  
in the snow. How did this happen?

Where did my nights go? This pile of books  
is all that's left of me. If me is who I am at all  
after all the gorgeous comings and goings.

26 January 2008

= = = = =

**Sift the sky out of the sky  
and what is left?**

*[dreamt]*

It was a question  
who knew who was asking  
me to decide. To sieve.

*[waking]*

Or what is left after the sky?  
Who breathes the dawn?

*[almost awake]*

Is it ready yet  
over the hill?

*[drifting back]*

Can't see the clock.  
Light is something to eat.  
The whole body hungers for it  
how? What is my mouth?

*[roused, fully awake]*

Give us a new mouth.

27 January 2008

## I MUST LEARN IRISH

*Tá an cailín ag teacht isteach—*

that's all the Gaelic I know,  
She's coming in from where she's been

and I no wiser. Except I ride her  
hidden in her hair

so all the airs she apprehends  
hold me too

and I have been partner  
to her investigations. That

is why a man studies the body  
of a woman so closely:

not to estimate her powers as his mate  
or bearer of his children but

to learn where he himself has been.  
What he has seen.

And what he has becomes.  
And this he learns from one astonished glance.

27 January 2008



*Ich komme, dein Theil!*

he sings, I am coming to you,  
I am a part of you already  
hurrying to make you whole,

the terrible jigsaw puzzle of your difference  
your pieces scattered all across the world  
you've gathered all these years

and need only me to be complete,  
I hurry towards you, trembling,  
rhyming with salvation.

27 January 2008

## Usage, a kind of farewell

To be using something  
is to be saying goodbye  
to it over and over

the hammer's high  
the nail laid low

the hammer can fall  
god knows where  
in the forest, the nail

it once drove in  
can never be lost.

27 January 2008

= = = = =

So much imperfects me  
like a sparrow in dust

you'll never come to understand  
how much I need

and the constellation of this need  
the way it casts

its shadow over every blessed thing  
defining the shape of what I think is me.

27 January 2008

= = = = =

This because that.  
Ask me another.  
A church with no people.  
A tear with no cheek.

27.1.08

= = = = =

Call towards a silence  
and make it answer.  
*Tá an bheann ag caint,*  
the woman's talking,

what does she say?  
Only silence knows  
and silence never tells.  
Sometimes though

you close your eyes  
and taste it on the air.

27 January 2008

Tá an bheann ag caint